

The Omen • Volume 50, Issue 2

IN THIS ISSUE...

Speak:

Make better choices... page 4-7

Presidential Mems... page 8

Crisis:

What happened 1/23... page 9-11

Sit-in... page 12-14

Regarding Feb. 1... page 15

On the door... page 16-17

History tugging at our stomachs... page 18-22

Articles on the protest... page 23-29

Reflections... page 30

Small Conversations... page 31-33

Lies:

The cat hypothesis... page 34

Hate:

Humorous Hampshire Horoscope... page 35

Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

Chloe: Sorry, we forgot.

Killian: ...

Simon: ...

Will: ...

Ida: ...

Olivia: ...

George: ...

Ivan: ...

Rejjia: ...

Brennan: ...

Alexis: ...

Front Cover: Chloe Omelchuck

Back Cover: Chloe Omelchuck

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office or Chloe's mailbox (0369)

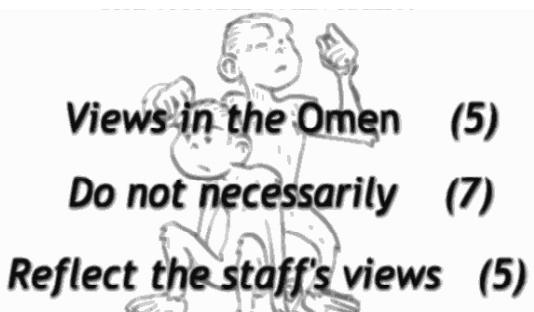
Policy

The Omen is a bimonthly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.



EDITORIAL

Chloe Anne Omelchuck

Hampshire and the media have a long and storied history- largely characterized by Hampshire students being burned by experiences with outside media. However, never before has the Omen, or indeed, any other Hampshire publication been shunned as “outside media” by the Hampshire student body. There has been a pervasive sense in the last two weeks that any publication of information is dangerous and subversive, perhaps even divisive. This comes at the same time that students are demanding information and transparency from the administration and the board as well as a place at the table in important decision making. There is a sense that publication is intended to target students and staff and indeed Hampshire as a whole, and that the press is simply waiting to prey on us.

All this hate is strange to the Omen as there are no predators here, only sheepdogs. By this, I mean that the Omen doesn’t do ‘journalism’ in the traditional sense. What we do is provide a platform for students to speak for themselves- however they choose to do it. And the fact is that the Omen staff are students at Hampshire who have as much right to speak about issues we see with the Hampshire community as anyone else who chooses to submit to the Omen. The Omen staff do not “report” on issues, we are not looking to sensationalize the true pain, fear, and heartache that Hampshire’s turmoil is causing to everyone involved. The Omen staff are feeling the same pain as everyone else in this situation.

The Omen exists for you, for the Hampshire community. The Omen staff are also people who value freedom of speech and of the press. To that end, the Omen staff exist to facilitate the publication of the thoughts and concerns of the community. We are sheepdogs, watching over the [not sheep] of Hampshire student voices. We would not exist without this community, and we serve this community. What we saw these last few weeks was a need for communication and coordination amongst the student body as well as a record of what is happening at this important juncture in Hampshire’s history, which is what we have tried to bring you in this issue. By doing so, we have become journalists in the sense of reporting here what we have seen, heard, and felt during this time.

We always say that the Omen loves you. Never has this statement been more tested than these past few weeks. We are a publication that welcomes all opinions, all experiences, and exists for the Hampshire community to speak freely. The level of pushback to that goal throughout this crisis from the students has been truly astounding. Then again, this is a situation that Hampshire has not encountered before. This is an issue of Hampshire’s very existence and mission. This is an issue of our morals and the governance of our college. This is a question of what voices at Hampshire matter and what voices speak the loudest.

The Omen staff cannot speak for the student body, only for ourselves. We are not journalists because we are not removed from this situation, but are living it just as you are. However, we are exceptionally passionate about freedom of speech, which goes hand in hand with the freedom of the press. We would like to remind the Hampshire community that freedom of speech does not mean a freedom from consequence. Free speech comes with responsibility to take ownership of views that you make known to the wider community. If you speak in a public setting, you are making the decision to make your views public knowledge. Unfortunately, real life is not like the internet, where you are anonymous. And, equally unfortunately, we live in a world where real life events can be recorded on the internet for a much wider audience than originally intended. That is the world we live in. It is easy to give in to fear. It is easy to hide from the consequences of speech, and action, and protest. Speaking for yourself is the only way that a wider freedom of expression can be maintained. But freedom means responsibility. Freedom has never been something that is easy, even after you’ve gotten it. It is one thing to have the freedom of speech and another to have the courage to use it.

*Be brave Hampshire, be strong, and remember:
The Omen loves you, please love us back*

Chloe Anne Omelchuck, Editrix

SECTION SPEAK

‘Make better choices’: Endangered Hawaiian monk seals keep getting eels stuck up their noses and scientists want them to stop

“We have no idea why this is suddenly happening.”

By Allyson Chiu, The Washington Post [submitted by Ida Kao]



December 7, 2018

A relaxed-looking juvenile Hawaiian monk seal lounges near a sandy white beach on some green foliage. Its eyes are half-closed and it has a serene expression on its face. But the seal's calm demeanor is surprising.

Why? Well, there's a long, black-and-white eel dangling from its right nostril.

“It’s just so shocking,” Claire Simeone, a veterinarian and monk seal expert based in Hawaii, told The Washington Post on Thursday. “It’s an animal that has another animal stuck up its nose.”

Simeone wasn’t the only person stunned by the photo of the seal and its unusual facial ornament that was shared earlier this week on Facebook by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Hawaiian

Monk Seal Research Program. The picture – taken this year in the remote northwestern Hawaiian islands – has since gone viral, drawing attention to a rare phenomenon that continues to baffle scientists who are now begging the endangered seals to “make better choices.”

It all began about two years ago when Charles Littnan, lead scientist of the monk seal program, woke up to a strange email from researchers in the field. The subject line was short: “Eel in nose.” “It was just like, ‘We found a seal with an eel stuck in its nose, do we have a protocol?’” Littnan told The Post in a phone interview.

There was none, Littnan said, and it took several emails and phone calls before the decision was made to grab the eel and try pulling it out.

“There was only maybe two inches of the eel actually still sticking out of the nose, so it was very much akin to the magician’s trick when they’re pulling out the handkerchiefs and they keep coming and coming and coming,” he said.

After less than a minute of tugging, a two-and-a-half-foot dead eel emerged from the seal’s nostril. Since then, Littnan said there have been at least three or four reported cases – the most recent occurring this fall. In all the cases, the eels were removed successfully and the seals are “doing great,” he said. None of the eels, however, survived.

“We have no idea why this is suddenly happening,” Littnan said. “You see some very strange things if you watch nature long enough and this could end up being one of these little oddities and mysteries of our careers that 40 years from now, we’ll be retired and still questioning quite how this happened.”

Researchers have already determined this is not the result of a human with a personal vendetta against seals and eels because all the cases were reported from remote islands that are only frequented by scientists. Littnan said he does have a few theories about how an eel could naturally end up wedged in a seal’s nostril.

A seal’s preferred prey – usually fish, octopuses and, of course, eels – like to hide within coral reefs to avoid being eaten, and since the marine mammals don’t have hands, they have to hunt with their faces.

“They like to stick their faces into the coral reef holes and they’ll spit water out of their mouths to flush things out and they’ll do all sorts of tricks, but they are shoving their faces into holes,” Littnan said.

Perhaps, he said, a cornered eel decided that the only way to escape or defend itself was to swim up its attacker’s nostril and young seals who are “not very adept at getting their food yet” were forced to learn a tough lesson.

But Littnan said that theory doesn’t make much sense.

“It almost does feel like one of those teenage trends that happen,” he said. “One juvenile seal did this very stupid thing and now the others are trying to mimic it.”

"They're really quite long eels, and their diameter is probably close to what it would be for a nasal passage," he said.

He added that a monk seal's nostrils, which reflexively close when they are diving for food, are very muscular and it would be difficult for any animal to push through.

"I struggle to think of an eel really wanting to force its way into a nose," he said.

The other way eels might be ending up in nostrils is through throwing up. Similar to how people sometimes end up accidentally spewing food or beverages from their noses, that could also happen to seals, who often regurgitate their meals.

Still, Littnan said it doesn't seem possible that a "long, fat eel" would end up going through a seal's nose rather than out of its mouth. The "most plausible" theory, he said, is that monk seal teenagers aren't all that different from their human counterparts. Monk seals "seem naturally attracted to getting into troublesome situations," Littnan said.

"It almost does feel like one of those teenage trends that happen," he said. "One juvenile seal did this very stupid thing and now the others are trying to mimic it."

Though no seals have died or been seriously affected by the eels, having a dead animal up their noses for



Scriblit

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WHEEEEEEN THEEEEE
NOSE OF A SEAL
HAS BEEN STUFFED WITH AN EEL
THAT'S A MORAY

Newsweek  @Newsweek

Hawaii seal gets eel stuck up nose bit.ly/2EfCCLt



any extended amount of time poses potentially adverse health impacts, said Simeone, director of Ke Kai Ola, a monk seal hospital in Hawaii run by the Marine Mammal Center.

With an eel lodged in its nose, a monk seal would not be able to close the blocked nostril when diving, which means water could get into their lungs and cause problems, such as pneumonia, Simeone said. A decomposing eel carcass could also lead to infections, she said.

On Facebook, the photo of the seal had more than 1,600 reactions as of early Friday morning. The caption read, "Mondays . . . it might not have been a good one for you but it had to have been better than an eel in your nose." It also became a trending moment on Twitter.

Many expressed sympathy for the seal having to experience what one Twitter user described as "the most uncomfortable thing ever."

"RIP eel, but how satisfying must it have been for the seal when it was pulled out?" another person wondered.

Littnan, however, told The Post the young seal "seemed apparently fairly oblivious to the fact that there was two feet of eel sticking out of its face."

In general, Simeone said marine animals are "very stoic," adding, "It's amazing the kinds of things they can tolerate."

While "eel snorting" has yet to really catch on in the seal community, Littnan said he hopes it never does.

"We're hoping it's just one of these flukes that will disappear and never be seen again," he said. If monk seals could understand humans, Littnan said he has a message for them: "I would gently plead for them to stop."

you've heard of



now get ready for



SECTION HAMP CRISIS

What happened at the student assembly with Mim, 1/23 1:30-2:30

Submitted by Emily Alden Black

As you might have heard, President Nelson held a Q and A the other day on the subject of the recent shake ups around campus. For those who are not aware, check you damn email. In short, Hampshire College is considering a “strategic partnership” as a solution for ongoing financial instability. As part of this, considerations have been made on not admitting a freshman class in Fall of 2019. This student assembly was held to share updates with the students and to respond to any questions we might have had. This, as best as I can recall, is what happened. (and as such, any faults or inaccuracies in this write up are my own.)

Around fifty students showed up in total, many of whom were surprisingly on time. President Nelson was accompanied by two additional speakers: John Slepian, (Dean of the Center for Academic Support and Advising) and Gloria Lopez (Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students). Nelson gave a brief opening statement before opening the floor for questions.

Goals:

- Nelson stated the goals and founding principles for this process up front: To do what is in the best interest of the students, faculty, and staff, to enhance the reputation of Hampshire College, to have the greatest and highest impact for the future, to “have the fortitude” to make difficult decisions, and to think about the surrounding community of Amherst and the Pioneer Valley.
- **First and foremost, though, the priority is to care for “our people.”**
- The has been very outspoken on the point of ensuring that Hampshire students will be able follow through on the education.
 - **Hampshire students will be able to complete their education as planned and graduate “with your round diplomas.”**

The Announcement:

- **Hampshire College administration didn’t originally plan to put out the announcement over break.**
- Originally, the announcement was meant to be aired after students were back on campus, in a more deliberate and controlled manner.
- However, there was a concern of incorrect, misleading, or otherwise damaging information coming out through the press.
- The announcement was sent out during winter break to mitigate any harm that might be done to Hampshire’s reputation by news stories.
- **Nelson stated that a public announcement was good for Hampshire**, both to get ahead of the news story and to begin to involve Hampshire students, faculty, and staff in the discussion.

Strategic Partnership:

- **A strategic partnership would likely be with another college or several colleges, depending on the situation.**
- There are multiple forms that a strategic partnership could take: a coalition with another small school or several small schools, where all schools are financially independent, or a strategic partnership, where one school “becomes part of another entity,” but the school still operates in a financially balanced way.
- Teaming up with other colleges helps to solve problems of scale and to reduce costs that way. For instance, combining

The Omen • Volume 50, Issue 2

the admissions offices of several into one to save costs.

- An ideal partnership would be with an entity which values what Hampshire is about as an institution.
- **Any partnership would involve some amount of change, but Hampshire will stay the same “in the important ways.”**

Funding:

- Hampshire has always worked in a “lean” financial environment.
- **Hampshire is a relatively poor school with a small endowment, so financial stability has been a consistent issue.**
- Our endowment, a total of 50 million-ish, is highly restricted, meaning that the college can’t just draw from that pot whenever it needs money.
- Hampshire’s situation is not unique. There are many small liberal arts colleges that are low on funds. In fact, the current situation of higher education across the country mirrors that of the American populace: the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.
- Suggestions have been made that Hampshire should start fundraising more aggressively, especially from more well-known Hampshire alumni, but according to Nelson this is not a long term solution.
- **“This is not a financial situation that one can fundraise the way out of.”** Hampshire can’t just apply for more money or ask around with the rich alumni to get out of this. To keep going as Hampshire College, Hampshire has to “find new ways of surviving in the world.”

Freshman Class:

- Financially, it would be better for Hampshire to admit an incoming class, as Hampshire is a tuition dependent institution.
- However, there are other factors that the administration has to consider in doing so, namely regulatory concerns, accreditation, and the wellbeing of both the applicants and current Hampshire students.
- Hampshire would need to be able to educate the incoming class according to the promised Hampshire model and to the promised level of quality, which the administration is not yet sure they would be able to promise, given the financial state of the college.
- As such, **it may be better in the long run for Hampshire to not accept an incoming class**, so that time and resources can be devoted to currently enrolled Hampshire students and to allow more time and resources “sort out” its current difficulties.

Regulations:

- **New regulations have come out recently that have affected Hampshire’s ability to accept an incoming class.**
- A number of schools in the surrounding area have closed their doors recently, often suddenly and without warning, and with little or no support for their students, and as such regulations have been tightened.
- In short, **a college has to be confident that they can promise to educate their incoming students in the way that they advertised, and Hampshire’s financial situation may inhibit its ability to follow through on that promise.**
- Hampshire has been transparent with regulators regarding the financial situation and has been in contact with various regulatory institutions, including the Department of Education and the Attorney General.

Accreditation:

- There is a possibility that if Hampshire admits an incoming class without a guarantee of stability looking forward, it may be at risk of losing its accreditation.
- **If we lose our accreditation, we are done.** Unaccredited, Hampshire would not be able to accept federal student aid, and this would be the nail in the coffin.
- **However, that would likely only happen if the situation could not be rectified**, and steps are being taken to do just that.
- Nelson wished to emphasize that it is not the educational model of Hampshire that is in question, which she said has received “a lot of praise” from accreditors.
- Hampshire has been transparent with accreditors, and because of this accreditation commissions will likely be easier on Hampshire than they would have been if the administration stayed silent.

Transparency

- **Hampshire College has been very transparent with regulatory agencies, accreditation commissions, and the Hampshire community throughout this process.**

• According to Nelson, Hampshire has “set a standard for transparency” with entities such as the Department of Education and the Attorney General.

• **This transparency is good for Hampshire**, since regulatory and accreditation entities do not want to punish a college harshly for being transparent about its economic situation. This would encourage other colleges in similar situations to hide issues that arise, and would ultimately cause more harm.

• Hampshire is aiming to be transparent whenever possible with the students, faculty, and staff.

• However, a strategic partner may wish for the college to say quiet to preserve their reputation.

• If this was the case, it is likely that representatives from the students, faculty, and staff would be brought in to contribute to the decision. The board of trustees would not be making the decision alone.

Faculty/Staff:

- **All faculty and staff received the official January announcement at the same time as the students.**

• However, assemblies were held as early as October with faculty, staff, and deans to inform them of the possibility of a strategic partnership.

• While special announcements were sent to faculty as early as Fall about a strategic partnership in Hampshire’s future, Nelson doesn’t “think it quite registered with everybody.”

• **Plans are being made to involve faculty in decision making.** As of now, the faculty are putting together a proposal for an entity that will represent them to the administration.

Budget Cuts

• **There will almost certainly be layoffs of faculty and staff.** The goal is to find the situation in which there will be the fewest layoffs and there will be the best opportunities for the people who lose their jobs.

• Outside of faculty and staff, cutbacks may be made in housing and support services, depending on the needs of the student body, but it is ultimately too early to say.

Transferring:

• **The administration is not encouraging students to transfer.** Near the end of the session, Lopez addressed this rumor saying that “we want you to stay” and that transferring is “a very personal choice.”

• The college wants to support students in pursuing their academic goals at Hampshire, as that is one of their top priorities.

• Lopez also encouraged students to think about the “value they have as a student here” under the current situation and act accordingly.

What does this mean for me?:

• **If you plan to stick around, you will graduate.** While many things are up in the air, that is not. The students, as far as we can tell, will be fine.

• That doesn’t mean there won’t be changes. Hampshire won’t be exactly the same when you leave as it was when you came, that much is unavoidable.

• However, **the basic educational model of Hampshire will stay intact**, and you will be able to follow through with your plans for div II and III.

What can you do?:

• **Get involved with the Student Advocacy Network.** As far as I can tell, the administration is taking student voices into account, and they are very much encouraging the Student Advocacy Network to strengthen and take part. But the student advocacy group is new, and it needs help, time, and active members to grow into a strong entity. **We need to help give them a chance.**

• **Stay informed.** Read your emails and attend the panels and assemblies being held to talk about this. In the case of fear and uncertainty, knowledge is a pretty powerful antidote.

• Also, maybe take a nap? Just as a generalized suggestion; we all need it.

SIT-IN

Ida Kao

There is no individual at Hampshire College who understands the whole story. When updates come by the hour and classes continue around it, the sit-in quickly fades into the background for an unaffiliated student. Given the hostile reaction by some protestors when understanding the events that have occurred in the past few weeks, it is also best to not discount the possible unreliability of secondhand accounts that I will recount.

It should also be noted that I am no unbiased actor here. As much as I attempted to act as a journalist in recording and understanding the events that have transpired while keeping my own opinions separated from what I have observed, I am a member of the Hampshire community with a deeply personal stake in its continued survival, just like the protestors. There is no way for me to untangle the facts from my own subjective experience, as is anyone else in the Hampshire community involved. There is also the hasteness by which this must be thrown together in order to be timely and relevant. Given the unpopularity of the presence of Omen staff at either the Dean of Students Office (DoS) or at the Office of the President, the Dean of Faculty, and the Dean of Staff on the first floor of Cole Science Center (Cole), possibly deceptive practices were necessary in order to prevent backlash. It was not journalistic of me to do so, nor, some may argue, was it ethical. But I am not truly a journalist, and while I identify myself as Omen staff and regularly showing up to Omen Layout meetings, there is no such designation outside of individuals that show up to Layout meetings on a given night. Whether that makes my actions less wrong or less journalistic, it is not necessarily my place to decide. I am not sure who gets to decide the rightness or wrongness of my actions here.

And what is this that the Hampshire community involved in? Many people would tell you it's "Hamp.Rise.Up" or "HampshireRiseUp" or

"Hampshire College Rise Up" or some variant of that. But what that label could possibly do to explain this complicated situation is beyond my understanding. Really, such a nebulous, vague terminology is baffling given the specificity of the context in which the sit-ins were started. Since The Omen is a Hampshire campus publication by Hampshire community members for the Hampshire community, and not the outside press seeking to hound students and administrators, the strategic partnership announcement and the chaos leading up to the beginning of the sit-in on the 31st of January is probably well known to every member of the Hampshire community and everything prior to the town hall meeting with the Board of Trustees is omitted in this recollection of recent events. If it is not as well publicized as I am assuming, it is a problem that can be easily remedied by walking up to the nearest person that has recently been on Hampshire's campus and inquiring about the financials of the College.

Thursday January 31st, 2019 - Day 1

At the open meeting between the Board of Trustees and the Student Advocacy Network, Hampshire College's latest attempt at student government, co-facilitator and student Andrew Gordon spoke comments into the microphone that read like an inside joke. Veiled references to student occupation and Hampshire's history of activism read as a wink and a nod to what I now know was happening in Cole Science Center and the Office of the Dean of Students.

Friday February 1, 2019 - Day 2

The Office of the Dean of Students mostly has press liaisons, and is generally very disorganized. Around 9:30 in the morning, most people in the DoS have slowly left since last night around 70 were in the halls. Facebook has not been set up yet. Apparently word has spread on Tinder. A statement by

organizers of the sit-in is read out at 10:00 in Office of Dean of Students. It is meant for wider higher education community and the Pioneer Valley; not just Hampshire. There is confusion over whether this is from SAN or the protestors. There was discussion over Hampshire's Disorientation Packet. By 1:30, most students have left. Mostly just organizing committee members left. Some people at the front desk are putting together the presentation, and asked me "for some space". It's so quiet that an SAN member video called someone at her house to bring her a pink sweater and tweezers.

Students are lining the halls on the first floor of Cole, even in the sections before the office itself. Blankets, pillows, and miscellaneous living items. Signs encouraging solidarity with students are taped to the entrance to the Cole. Pizza boxes torn in half and decorated with colored pencil and paint hang up on the hall, within the set of doors closest to the office. The bulletin board just outside the Dean of Faculty Office has a pizza box with Community Norms written on in. I have confirmation from Andrew that the first few students came in at 2:30 yesterday, an hour before the meeting in FPH with the Board of Trustees started.

The plan given the following situation occurs as follows:

-If Board disagrees with everything, no confidence petition circulates.

-If Board delays vote, does not acquiesce elsewhere, sit ins continue.

The Office of the President is closed and dark. Students expect Mim to avoid the office and protestors at all costs. One student says that paint was left in the sink and needs to be cleaned up.

Updates from organizers meeting by SAN member Naia, is that the official name of this protest is HampshireRiseUp, and are on Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Facebook still not up.

At 1:00 news comes to Cole that "Postpone" has been added to the ballot on the Board of Trustees vote. After trouble with keeping alumni and Board

members from accessing the private HampRiseUp Instagram, the decision was made to change it from private to open. Someone at Cole states that people at the Dean of Students are angry that they are not getting updates. Technology issues are happening, specifically with Facebook. Andrew wants to distribute a press statement to all students.

As per an email sent out to all students, I went to the RCC at 7:00 at night. I came in a bit late and it was very full. Most students were standing with their backs to the wall holding hands and forming a circle, although there was a lot of unheld hands and other random people gathered near the entrance. What looked to be a small smattering of students, faculty, staff, possibly other trustees, and possibly parents and children/older siblings of either current students, alumni, or faculty/staff were gathered offset from the students holding hands, but still quite a bit away from where the Chair, the President, and one or two other Trustees were at the podium. Immediately after the statement by the Chair of the Board that Hampshire would not take in a 19F class beyond the EDI students, a student near me shouted "Hampshire!" really loudly. Then other people picked it up and it was "Hampshire United!" and as the people picked it up it turned into "Hampshire United! We Will Not Be Divided!" for who knows how long, but probably a few minutes. It drowned out the rest of what the Chair was saying, which took probably a minute or so, and as the Chair finished, she and the other people at the podium moved forward closer to the center of the gymnasium and the non-students in the non-hand holding group came forward and people started hugging and other shows of affection. Then all of the students started walking out to resume the sit-ins in the Dean of Students Office (on the second floor of one of the dorms' area offices) and the first floor of Cole, still chanting.

I eventually had to break with the students marching towards the Dean of Students Office and get to my dorm. It was then that I decided to take Saturday and possibly Sunday off for the sake of my mental health.

Monday February 4th, 2019 - Day 5

1:30 Lopez talking to students in DoS

It's 9:00 at night, and an open meeting with students deliberating next steps ends. The general conclusion is that while there's still a pervasive sense of community and good vibes, it doesn't translate into concrete action. People should not judge other for not participating and practice self care. I asked several people about any important activities over the weekend, and while many give different answers, there were no reports of meetings or new demands being written.

Tuesday, February 5th, 2019 - Day 6

A presentation was given by Sarahi, a non-SAN protest organizer on how to and how not to talk to outside press. My notes are below.

Purpose of press:

- provide a narrative (can't be considered part of sit in)
- Counter narrative (can't do that on your own)
- Disseminate info (only what's cleared? By sit in orgs?)

Press will ask for:

- reactionary comments
- Name/who you are
- Your thoughts on situation
- Info on situation
- Press protocol

main inquiries about meetings taken to liaisons

Interviews/commentary done with a "buddy"

Press is press no matter the relationship

Any info should be cleared - wtf

When press arrives:

- invited guests, chaperoned/monitored
- Like children, welcomed but closely supervised
- Don't assume they have best interest in mind, regardless of Hamp connection
- Set boundaries and be strict
- Keep commentary to closed statements, no open commentary
- Be precise, concise
- If you don't know the answer, say so and

refer to the right person

Comment by Sarahi: Every day the sit-ins continue, administration officials will escalate and put pressure on the protestors.

A meeting with Lopez, Mim, and several other administration officials at 4:30 in the Office of the President has people expressing how much they care about Hamp and it's there home; that's why they're in Cole, an uncomfortable place to be in and make an effort to keeping place clean and organized. Lopez complained that the Jewish student praying in the DoS earlier in the day was distracting and creating a "hostile environment" while she was writing an email assuring a parent that their student was safe. A student wants transparency, honesty, etc. when dialogue happens. Lopez wanted dialogue before a prayer started, but there was pushback stating that dialogue between the prayer and God is all that's necessary. Since the sit-in was not just about cohabitation; also the end goal of meeting some demands, but now administration can finally see students suffer from food insecurity and lack of good study spaces and educational facilities despite many living off campus, hidden from sight.

At around 8:20 at night, SOURCE students arrive at the Airport Lounge for the open SAN meeting. The purpose was a consensus building meeting with Janine of Campus Leadership and Activities, but there was pushback by a representative that did not participate but felt it was unfair for protestors to use language about standing in solidarity with staff and faculty, which pushed an agenda and representing one side unfairly. It was an incredibly tense meeting that ended with an argument that boiled down to the purpose of the SAN and the best next steps forward; either create bylaws and work towards establishing SAN as a government, or continue with many members working with the sit-in and having administration meet towards their demands.

Regarding the February 1st Deadline to Admit a Hampshire Class for the Fall of 2019

Board Members, Trustees, and affiliated concerned with the future of Hampshire College

Through deliberation with members of the Hampshire College community, we have come to the conclusion that making a decision about admitting a class for the Fall of 2019 today is a failure on the part of the Hampshire Senior Administration and the Board of Trustees. We believe that the community-involved decision-making model promised to us has been deeply compromised by the lack of transparency and conversation surrounding the financial and structural issues that the college is facing. This includes the Board of Trustees' self-imposed deadline to announce the decision.

We would like to make it clear that our constituency has never opposed the movement toward finding a sustainable financial path but rather, we have pushed for material evidence of collective decision-making through increased student, staff, and faculty inclusion in the planning process. The goals and demands of these groups have been misinterpreted and/or dismissed by the senior leadership, and this has taken a toll on establishing a line of communication with the entire board.

We believe that President Nelson's announcement for a merger did not allow for open lines of communication such that the Hampshire community would be informed in a timely manner. This made it clear to us that the administration does not respect the representative democracy they chose to be a part of. The discussion around securing Hampshire's future began prior to President Nelson's appointment. Despite this, staff, faculty, and students, were notified at the same time on January 15th demonstrating the lack of information moving between the president and faculty, staff, and students.

President Nelson obscured important details about Hampshire's path toward fiscal sustainability. These details were shared only two weeks prior to the Early Decision admissions deadline, leaving staff, faculty, and students without adequate information, representation, and time to work through the process of finding a merger for the future for Hampshire College. As an institution that prides itself on, and directly profits off of, the language and unique philosophy of shared governance, this is unacceptable. To know is not enough.

While we appreciate the efforts on the part of the administration to secure Hampshire's financial future, we must highlight the hypocrisy in the desire to sustain the college's investments while ignoring the needs of its students. Over the past 4 years, we have observed a slow degradation of the ideals Hampshire claims to defend (i.e. anti-racism, representative democracy etc...). When students have spoken out and taken action in the form of demonstrations, occupations, and direct discussions with the administration and our constituents, we have been dismissed as disrespectful and idealistic.

The current political context makes it especially necessary for us to make space for unconventional schools like Hampshire College. The nuanced conversations with faculty, staff, and alums have proven that we, amongst ourselves, have found a way to practice a distributive governance dialogue and hope the administration will follow suit. We have hope that the board is at least considering that this decision will have an impact not just on Hampshire college and our community but will set a precedent for liberal arts colleges across the US. **We demand voting rights for the staff and faculty crisis committee, as well as a delay in the decision on whether or not to admit a class for the fall of 2019.**

Sincerely,

Constituents of SOURCE (Students of Under-Represented Cultures and Ethnicities), COSA (Coalition of Students Affected by Ableism), SAN (Student Advocacy Network), Student Workers of Residence Life, and Members of the Student Body individuals

submitted by Sarahi Silva, February 1, 2019

The Omen • Volume 50, Issue 2

*To: President Miriam Nelson, Chief Financial Officer Mary McEneaney, Chair of the Board Gaye Hill and Vice-Chair Kim Saal, the Hampshire College Board of Trustees, and the Executive Leadership of Hampshire College
Cc: All members of the Hampshire College community
From: Members of the Hamp Rise Up Coalition
Date: 02/06/2019*

Summary

We write this as students who are passionate and concerned about the future of Hampshire College and the important ideals it represents. Hampshire College is a ground-breaking institution that provides an important alternative to traditional higher education. We believe it is critical for Hampshire College, along with its founding ideals, to survive this current crisis intact. Towards that end, we are asking the College and its leadership team to specifically focus on transparency, Hampshire Shared Governance, and overall equity. Within this document, we have detailed our core principles that must be addressed before we are willing to end our sit-ins at The Dean of Students Office and the Cole Science Center.

Note: This document has been authored by a committee of students representing the Hamp Rise Up movement. Its contents have been voted on by a super majority of students attending three separate meetings opened to the entire student body. Hamp Rise Up does not intend to singularly reflect the opinions of the entire student body.

A. Transparency

We request complete transparency. Information must be disseminated via multiple accessible mediums, regarding decisions that have been made to date as well as the ongoing deliberations and decision-making processes of executive leadership. We request that, going forward, information be shared as soon as accessible to the executive senior leadership to provide enough time for the community to weigh in. The information we are requesting includes all factors relevant to the decisions as well as timelines and milestones.

We need to be provided with full explanations as to why any information is being kept from the Hampshire community as a result of existing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). In addition, we expect the list of different governing bodies, committees, and groups in which members signed NDAs. We stand with the American Association for University Professors Hampshire Chapter (AAUP) and agree that NDAs do not belong in an educational environment.

To the extent certain individuals are unable to share their candid views as a result of NDAs, we ask that such individuals be given the opportunity to terminate their NDAs and remain as a full member of any governing body, committee, or group.

B. Hampshire Shared Governance

We would like the remaining two positions on the Board of Trustees be filled, no later than March 1, with student trustees elected by their peers so that they have the ability to participate in ongoing deliberations.

We, as students, request a direct role in all future decision-making processes that concern the College and its larger community. In order to facilitate that, we expect representative committees to be formed and charged with the task to advise and have voting power in these processes.

The current version of the Hampshire College Constitution was last revised and adopted on February 27, 1998. We believe that the Hampshire Constitution should be revised with direct input from the broader community and ultimately approved by staff, faculty, and students.

We request a comprehensive evaluation by the community on the current governing bodies of Hampshire College, their stated roles, and whether they act as a form of adequate representation of students, staff, and faculty.

We request a comprehensive evaluation of the power that the Board of Trustees has in relationship to the power of the other Hampshire constituencies.

We understand that changes are to be expected as we accept a strategic long term partner. However, we strongly feel that any partner we are thinking of should understand and agree that any additional revisions of our Hampshire Constitution must be accepted by our staff, faculty, and students to ensure the preservation of the core of Hampshire's educational model. The terms must be agreed to by the community.

C. Overall Equity

We request affirmative acknowledgment that anyone participating in the sit-ins and related activities will be protected from loss of employment, conduct hearings, or any other penalties. All members of the community have the right to assemble, to protest, and to freely express their beliefs.

We demand that affinity services and spaces, like the Cultural Center and the James Baldwin Scholars program, must survive under any strategic partnership. Moreover, these spaces and services ought to operate under the direction of the students they serve. We want confirmation that the executive leadership shares this view and will maintain these services and spaces.

We demand assurances that all staff critical for: (i) the support of disabled and/or neurodivergent students, (ii) and the support for Students of Underrepresented Races, Cultures, and Ethnicities (SOURCE), and (iii) First Generation students, should not be laid off and any positions still open should be filled as quickly as possible.

The work accomplished by affinity groups (such as divestments achieved by the Decolonize Media Collective) should not be forgotten or overridden by any potential partnership.

We stand in solidarity with faculty, staff, alumni, and campus workers. We demand that their demands be met in full once presented.

We request a town hall meeting be scheduled to discuss these issues on Monday, February 11, or before. We ask that this meeting not conflict with any Hampshire College class-times, that it be live-streamed, and that it be recorded for later viewing. This meeting should be facilitated by students and open to all members of the community and be located in an accessible space that can comfortably accommodate all who wish to attend. We also request the attendance and participation of: President Miriam Nelson, Chief Financial Officer Mary McEneany, Chair of the Board Gaye Hill, and Vice-Chair Kim Saal.

submitted by Chloe Omelchuck [after finding it on the door of my mod and in my email] February 7th, 2019

When we felt the weight of history tugging at our stomachs: Or, a fairly selfish individual navigates a collective struggle

By Simon Fields

What is a day? 24 hours? 1,440 minutes? 86,400 seconds? On Venus a day is 6,000 hours. Why do I use Venus as an example? Because in the last issue, I accidentally left erroneous references to Mars in a story about a Venetian Victorian Utopia. There was a change of plans, and planets in the writing process... I digress.

Sometimes it seems that days can move remarkably quickly, or else that they can be remarkably long and — perhaps the most precise way to put it is — some days can seem filled with more events than one would imagine possible. For the purposes of this story, I'll relate my experiences of three days that we all lived through, January 31 - February 2, 2019.

It's curious, now that I think about it, that during my first year at Hampshire, corresponding days — February 1-3, were also incredibly fast paced, jam-packed. But this was because of a personal drama, not one that affected the campus in the same way as the one that I witnessed this last week, the first February days of my last semester at Hampshire College.

January 31, 1:11 PM, The Bridge

There I was, waiting for lunch when I ran into Rejjia. "Did you see my Facebook message?"

"No."

"I sent you a message with a link to our demands for the Board — mainly about delaying a decision on accepting an F'19 class. We're having a march at 2:30."

"Where are we marching?"

"To FPH."

"Are we going into the Main Lecture Hall?"

"We're not sure yet — first we're going into the FPH Lobby."

We were already standing by the wall, the wall at the edge of the Bridge Cafe that people sit near to watch Basketball Games. I looked over the other side — an incredible number of people had already assembled in the basketball court, and there was still well over an hour till the march. After dashing to the APL to send some key emails, ("There's a march, this may affect attendance in class today") I joined them. Students standing in a line in front of the assembled masses were wearing something that signified that they were coordinating the action. Was it orange? I don't remember.

I asked someone if I could read the printed list of demands that they were holding, naturally thinking that I'd only join the march if the demands were reasonable. Delay the vote, have greater

input from the Faculty. Let us be more involved in determining the future of our school. These all seemed reasonable. Crucially there was not a demand to actually admit an F'19 class. Just to delay and essentially democratize the process — to February 15 at the latest.

"What are you doing?" Arabella asked. "Oh," not requiring explanation, "yeah it would be a good thing to know what exactly we're demanding." She looked at the paper too.

The demands made sense. However, I had a class that met precisely at 2:30. I rushed off at 2:15, telling Rejjia and someone else that I'd meet them in the lobby. I got to FPH, checked that it would be okay to miss class — permission obtained, I noticed nobody was in the FPH Lobby yet. So I ran back to the RCC, and the March was just about to begin; a minute or two later than planned.

What a march it was. According to Marlon's headcount, we had 3 quarters of the student body marching together as one, out the doors of the RCC, past the street lamps, past the FPH Mural. And I was there, not as a journalist, but as a concerned student (from that point, to the end of my narrative).

There I was, back in the FPH, trying to stand near corners so as not to feel overwhelmed, I somehow maneuvered myself into the middle of the crowded lobby. On my way back to the periphery, one of the SAN students made the big announcement. "We're going in!" But before we could go in, we had to have some sense of discipline, and we were warned against making too much noise.

From the outset, this was clearly a movement that was trying to marshal radical and more respectable wings at the same time. Successful movements very often do have some combination of negotiators and agitators, and this does not always even cause tension. Somebody needs to be loud, and somebody needs to be soft-spoken.

Movements generally need their MLK and their Malcolm X for lack of a better analogy.

I turned to someone and asked, "ready to storm the Bastille?" "Yeah Haha!" This is generation Z for you: There's nothing like engaging in the aesthetics of revolution when you safely know that revolution isn't quite where things are headed.

At any rate, in we flowed. It was a beautiful sight. I was surprised that there was capacity for all of us in that room, but there was.

There's one remark from this assembly that I'll never forget — one remark that I couldn't shake out of my mind. "I don't want to ever have to speak about Hampshire College in the past tense." I momentarily faced the wooden wall at the very back of the Main Lecture Hall, sensing that I might well up in tears. I held most of them back though.

(Damn snowflake, you may say. Yeah yeah, whatever.)

Some of the comments in this meeting seemed overly confrontational, others, overly appeasing.

Again, a good respectable-radical dialectic was maintained. Perhaps this is my own bias, (since he's a friend) but when our Student Trustee Alternate (Aram M.) pointed out that if students and faculty are more involved in the decision making process, we can also do much more to help the campus weather the crisis — from poring over the figures and doing analysis on the kinds of creative solutions that could move us away from the brink, to involvement in reaching out to potential partner institutions, to fundraising — that seemed to be a very constructive point.

I'll say even now, at a moment when the student movement is less energized than it was last Thursday, this remains the sort of forward agenda we should be advocating for. Recriminations over the way that the announcement was made may feel good, and there was definitely a place for them in earlier meetings. At some point though, we have to say, okay, we're in this situation — moving forward, do more to consult us and you will have more of our support. You can utilize the brainpower of the students and faculty — but only if you show us enough respect to create more seats at the decision making table — for us.

The crux of the situation, with peak levels of student engagement in a packed room, with board members sharing that room, came when Marlon asked point blank, "Will you hold a vote now?" "Actually only half — technically less than half, of the board is present right now. It's less than half because a few of us aren't on campus."

"Oh really?" A number of sarcastic replies came.

"Because we have lives outside of Hampshire College." Fair point I suppose, though this didn't abate the tension a jot. Gaye Hill, Chair of the Board said, "This is how this works. This is a Representative Democracy, and if you don't like it you can deal with it."

This was a curious way to encourage our retreat. Boards are generally not representative democracies. I first came across this strange delusion in a Frasier episode, when Frasier Crane referred to his condo board in similarly grand terms.

For starters, representative democracy is itself much less

participatory or ideal than direct democracy. But say you disagree with me. Say you believe that the best way to involve people is through a representative democracy. Our board is unelected. SAN is elected — 10 out of 11 SAN students had voted differently from how the Board ultimately voted.

But for an unelected board to claim the mantle and moral power of Representative Democracy is pretty rich. It would be like dismantling workers councils — the organs of democracy and socialism in Russia after the Tsar fell, while calling your state a Socialist Republic. Just saying — grand terms get constantly used by people in positions of power who don't get close to practicing them.

Look, I don't claim to be the most consistent or principled person in the world — if you have the patience to read this article you'll find contradictions, but at least I don't use contradictions to justify my ability to call the shots on issues that affect disempowered stakeholders.

Sorry to get side-tracked.

At any rate, after the meeting ended, I went over to the student trustee alternate's house. I had a delicious Greek dinner (leftovers from a board meeting) and was informed that the Board probably already made up its mind, and would simply be making the announcement tomorrow.

I trudged back to my own dorm and began settling in for a normal Thursday night. At around 11 I heard a knock at the door. Who could it be? A long-lost love? Not exactly.

I opened the door, "Hi —." Given the quasi sensitive nature of what they were doing, I'm choosing not to name the person who knocked at my door.

"We're circulating a no-confidence petition."

"Is this the British Parliament?" I couldn't help asking.

"Not exactly. The No-confidence petition is basically a way to pressure the Administration to listen to our demands."

"Is there some mechanism for no-confidence motions?"

"Not exactly. It would be something of a symbolic move. If you want more information you should go to the sit in."

"What sit in?"

"Well, there's a sit-in just over at the Dean of Students Office. Do you know where it is?"

"Yeah the second floor of the Merrill Living Room?"

"Yeah."

You can see though, the reason why I'm not writing this in a remotely journalistic way. I cannot claim to be objective. Arguably nobody can, but my involvement in the sit-ins compromises anything I may do in the realm of reportage, and vice versa.

I've been at Hampshire since August 2014 — I've seen many

things go down. I've experienced the joys and frustrations of four years at Hampshire. (I was gone for an intervening year, which is why I'm still here..)

Yes, I've seen our student body hit some low points, and high points, but I was never prouder to be a Hampshire student than I was on Thursday, or even on Friday.

Ascending the Merrill Living Room stairs, I passed by a Campus officer — “hello there.”

“Hello.”

At the front of the office, a number of students were wearing blue pieces of paper— these were our designated police liaisons.

The first night was a party. We sat around the Dean's Conference Room, listening to music, cracking jokes. I drank an IPA.

“Marlon, Aram was telling me that the Board might have already made their decision, and that tomorrow is just the day they'll be announcing it.”

Now honestly, Marlon had every reason to say that this wasn't the case. Yet the way that he said that the vote was tomorrow, and that there were many undecided members of the board, convinced me. It was coming from SAN, it was coming from Faculty and from discussions with individual board members. “The vote will be tomorrow and they're divided on the question of whether to delay the decision.”

We still had pizza at this point in the night, and even some ice cream. I wanted to witness the Cole sit in so I walked over there, and saw students sleeping right in front of the door of Mim's Office. A beautiful sign: “To know is not enough, but WE NEED TO KNOW” graced the scene. I returned to the Dean of Students Office and slept up against a wall in the hallway from 3 am to 5 am. When I woke up, and when I realized that I wasn't falling back asleep, I began thinking: okay, next comes the hard part of the sit-in. It's one thing to party in the Dean's Office in the evening, when Gloria isn't here. What happens when she shows up?

Friday, February 1st

In the cramped hallway I realized that I had been sleeping right next to the bathroom door. Awkward. Where to sit?

At one point I sat at the part of the hallway closest to the door. DO I really want to sit here? I'd be the first malcontent Gloria sees if she comes to work today? I can be one of the malcontents but I'm not sure I want to be the one who welcomes her.

What would I have said if I were the student closest to the door. “Hi Gloria. How's it going? Great to see you. Yeah it's nothing personal really just erm, give us more of a role in this process.”

Or “[clears throat] this is awkward.” “Nothing personal but, welcome to your office.” The possibilities of social anxiety inducing introductions are endless. I can claim to have attended the sit-in for a while, but I also must own I had a pretty cowardly disposition when push came to shove.

Five hours of changing places in the hallway where I was “sitting in” ended. Eating a bit of breakfast but not enough. (Other days, and even at other times that day, there was much more food, but this morning my stomach ached for more.) At 9 AM people began noting that almost everyone in the office was late for work. By 9:30 we wised up to the fact that all of the Dean of Students employees, save one, were huddling in a room at the front of the office that had, I'm pretty sure, a door outside of our own hallway.

Credit where credit's due. Gloria spoke to us that morning. I thought that the balance between confrontation and appeasement had somewhat shifted, towards confrontation from our own end. I reiterated the point that Aram made, and the point that I made in the email. If you consult us, you can leverage us. Andrew spoke about the conditions faced by Hampshire's workers, who were often expected to put in extra work without being paid or even having a voice in how things go.. (Good ole Marxian analysis for the situation) — and then he bridged it to my point about the opportunity cost of leaving us out of the decision making process.

Fortunately we had made many of our points before a first year said, “When we started in August you and Mim spoke to us, and told us that this was your first year too, and you told us that we're all in the same boat and that you care about us. I think that I was naive to believe you.”

“I have a meeting very soon. How soon is it?” She asked a colleague.

“You were going to leave for it 10 minutes before. Now it's 3 minutes till it starts.” Someday I want to work with someone who'll back me up that way. Wouldn't that be great?

As Gloria left the room I got in two more words, embarrassingly servile words: “Leverage us.”

Someone pointed out that this could be interpreted as a signal that we're willing to be ‘leveraged’ without being given a say at the table, and this really wasn't my meaning or intent.

I explained, “I had to play the kiss ass. Someone has to be the kiss ass, even when other people are keeping up the pressure.” I genuinely believe this. Successful movements have loud and soft voices.

Aram and I brought in Greek leftovers, courtesy of the Board. As people eat their baklava, I told someone about how, as a kid, I mispronounced the “Battle of Balaclava” calling it the “Battle of Baklava.” Fun times. (Well, not for the Light Brigade).

Then in a strategizing session we got exciting emails from the board, and after each one digested the impacts and ramifications. “They’re putting delay on their ballot, so it’s going to be an option.”

“They won’t be making the announcement as soon as they had thought. This may mean that they’re having trouble deliberating. “Or it may mean that they’re trying to fake us out.”

In case they were trying to fake us out, I opted to be one of the numerous canvassers telling students to come to the FPH one more time. “We need to be ready, just in case they suddenly email us and say the vote will be held in 15 minutes.” Aram and I talked to students in the Dining Commons, we went to Greenwich and didn’t really talk to anyone, and then Prescott, most people had already heard. It reminded me of canvassing on an Election Day, by which time most of the people you call on will tell you, “We’ve already heard from you, leave us alone, we’re going.” You sort of have to show quickly expressed, genuine gratitude for this sentiment. Some folks thanked us and told us to keep up the good work.

The Powerpoint presentation

Watching the incredible discipline and self composure of Sarahi was impressive. The fact that, even as fairly non-hierarchical opponents to the administration, we still had some vertical elements didn’t disturb me as much as it would’ve done a year before. We are in a crisis, and the exigencies of the moment call for the leadership of people like Sarahi and Marlin — who have their shit together. I actually thought about the Rebel Alliance in Star Wars, and the way that they acted like their own highly structured bureaucracy — and I insipidly thought about how this Rebel Alliance were ‘the good guys,’ and by imagining our side as being on the side of the Jedi I made it much easier for myself to sink into my comfortable seat.

My mind even wandered very dangerously lazily, to Ocalan and the hyper democratic (to the point of being Anarchist) Syrian Kurds. In the exigencies of a crisis, even these Syrian Kurds had to be a little vertical in their organization. (According to some sources, more than just a little vertical/authoritarian). Of course, the exigencies of Hampshire’s crisis aren’t remotely comparable to North Syria; nobody in this drama could be compared to Asad, ISIS, or Erdogan, and our living conditions are infinitely better. Obviously. INFINITELY! Wow that was very lazy mind wandering.

Likewise nobody could really be compared to the Galactic Empire. Every actor in this crisis, from my vantage point, acts with the overarching motive of saving Hampshire. The issue, as I see it, is that the Administration misses major opportunities by excluding students and faculty from the decision making — I said it earlier. If more people are included in making decisions that impact their future, such a scenario wouldn’t only be far

more fair and just. It would also enable a great army of students and professors to pore over the numbers, to reach out to potential partners and to find creative solutions that can help us get out of this mess.

One key thing I learned in this meeting is that the Professors Association spoke to the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office, which described the pace of the legislation that affects us (including ‘stress tests’ that would make it much easier to lose accreditation should we admit F’19 students) as ‘glacial.’ Legislation whose passage has been described by Admin as “imminent” may actually be ‘glacial.’ Again, according to the Professor’s Association, it may take 18 months for such legislation to pass, which affords us much more breathing time than we may assume we have. I’m not saying that we should be reckless in over-accounting how much time we have, but an under-accounting could also be reckless, and force us into taking risky actions. (Such as not accepting an F’19 class).

At any rate, when Sarahi spoke about issues involving the press, I honestly didn’t think through the implications. Daniel Vogel gave us bad PR — we do need to be careful about how our student body, and school appears to the outside world. It struck me as a little condescending for Sarahi to imply that she’s the only person capable of handling the press (later she held trainings for other press liaisons.) What I did not anticipate was that The Omen, a magazine whose most recent back cover said, “The Omen wants YOU to SUBMIT” would be considered press. Will and Ida were impressing me by actually taking their role seriously — note taking and actually becoming journalists. I felt that I was too old an Omen veteran to ever act as a journalist, at least in any Omen related capacity. I failed to anticipate that people would ever show hostility to Omen Staff on the grounds that we’re press. Whatever capacity Will and Ida and I have acted in, we’re all students. As I mentioned earlier, this particular narrative isn’t journalistic. I was too involved in the movement to be objective.

Speaking of involvement in the movement, I took a nap.

The nap

After the assembly ended at 4:30, I went to my dorm room. I began sleeping at around 5. Twenty or so minutes into my nap my inbox received some unread email concerning a decision that would be announced in the RCC at 7:30 PM. I woke up at 11 PM, called my parents and told them, “Remember how last night I was saying it’s done, they won’t accept a Fall’19 class, they made a decision and they’ll just be announcing it tomorrow? Well it turned out that wasn’t the case, and from the time we spoke till just a few hours ago, we’ve been pushing to get the board to delay its decision by two weeks.” And I told them my sit-in stories.

I went back to sleep.

Saturday Morning

The next morning my alum buddy Hank Piper posted the contents of the Board's letter. The decision was made, and no delay was involved. Early Decision students would be admitted (though we later learned, with a letter that practically begged them not to come here. Perhaps Admin had no choice but to write the letter that way, but it was still alarming stuff); nobody else in the F'19 class would be. Although I darted in and out of the Dean of Students Office over the weekend, and slept there one more night, I began to wonder if I had gotten too caught up in the moment. It was beautiful to see the solidarity that emerged within the student body on Thursday and Friday. It was touching. It was truly inspiring. These were some of the proudest moments I witnessed.

Saturday morning there was one more strategy session and attending it was still awe inspiring. It's easy to glorify Thursday or Friday, but I really admired the sit-in people even more during this meeting. Here they were, in for the long haul, anticipating challenges, initiating all sorts of projects, coordinating, doing outreach; it was dizzying. Even now, post decision and inside of the Dean of Students' Office organizing hub/bubble, I felt the incredible weight of hampshire history. You could sense its presence everywhere in the room, on every face, and as I grew dizzier at the sheer volume of activity we were doing, I could feel the weight of history dragging on my stomach.

The amount of detail that goes into organizing, the number of factors you have to take into account — the projects you have to parcel out and delegate — it's actually a lot like governance. Someday, and I speak not only of Hampshire but of the wider world, someday we will be governed by decentralized, non-hierarchical organizers — someday we will live in a world that is governed by a process that is basically as detail oriented, and grounded in reality but that nevertheless is far more just, free, and democratic than the one we currently live in.

Nevertheless, by Saturday afternoon, I realized that by some time the next day, I'd have to disengage from the sit-ins. I wasn't getting nearly enough of my work done. I also wondered, wistfully, whether the effort we were engaged in was something that could, in effect, save Hampshire, or whether this was some beautiful collective mourning process, carried out in the only way we know — through protest.

I express my thinking, but I don't want to dissuade people who are involved. I consider the people who have the courage of their convictions to remain seated in Cole and the Dean of Students' Office heroes. They're better people than I am, they have incredible endurance and whatever one may think of their positions or their tactics, these are not lazy people. These are courageous, thoughtful people who are ready to subject themselves to cramped quarters — beautify those quarters, build a life within those quarters, because they care about our school,

and because they're ready to fight for its future. They are not the only heroes. My friends Will and Ida have been copiously reporting on the situation, note taking, coordinating, and in this very issue, you will encounter the results of their work. (I come out as a bit of an egoistic anti-hero — I was among the less committed of the sit-in protesters, and the least journalistic of the Omen staff.) Yet one would be remiss without mentioning that there are still more heroes in this narrative. The Faculty, are heroes, most of the staff — why even the folks at the very top, the "Senior Leadership" deserve some respect for operating in a combusting situation. Mim et al. may or may not be making the wrong calls. The truth is, right or wrong, Admin couldn't have found a stickier situation if they actively looked for one — and I don't envy them. As a matter of fact, a fair portion of the resentment from the student body actually comes from a place of love, love for the institution, and all the people who make Hampshire what it is. Even the Senior Leadership, but I suppose the only way Senior Leadership experiences that love is by accountability on steroids. JLash grew into his role because he understood this.

Oh a word on JLash. That guy always knew how to look good. When he was speaking to students he'd say, "Deep down at heart, here at Hampshire we're all anarchists." Then efforts to form a student government were tentatively supported, but JLash never put himself in the position of personally pushing back against students who wanted more of a role in governance. He left that work to Gloria and then when he sensed the oncoming disaster, he decided to go fly fishing! In Vermont! No wonder he was so ready to support the transition to Mim! DAMMIT JLASH!!!!!! YOU COME OUT WAY TOO CLEAN IN ALL THIS!!!!!!!!!!

YOU'RE AWESOME BUT STILL DAMMIT!!!! OKAY
MIM YOU'RE AWESOME TOO, EVEN IF YOUR GOOD
INTENTIONS COULD TAKE US OFF THE CLIFF! YOU
HAVE A TOUGH AS NAILS JOB...

But in all seriousness, I love this school, and although I might join some fly fishing expedition in Vermont after I graduate this May, I hope that somehow or another, we stay above water. Non Satis Scire. To know is not enough, but we need to know.

ARTICLES ON THE PROTEST: A FAKE JOURNALIST'S JOURNAL ARTICLE

BY WILL NEWHALL

Thursday, January 31 2:30pm FPH:

Today, the day before the announcement on whether or not an incoming class will be accepted, I came to FPH Foyer, as I'd been instructed to by the powers that be. Soon after, fellow Omen Staff Ida came into the foyer, equally confused. "Hey! Do you know what's going on?" She asks me playing with her hair. "No idea," I said, trying to play with my hair and then remembering that mine's too short. Damn. Then we heard it. The mass. The noise. The Hampshire-ness. They were coming. "Whose school?" "Our school!" "Whose school?" "Our School!" Like one great Hampshire sponge they arrived. Seeing this, I decided to head upstairs to avoid the enormous group of people. "Whose School? Our School!" They say with vigor. Looking over the balcony, I began taking notes on what's going on all around me. *ping* I got a text:

"...seriously?" Ida texted me. "What the fuck... Why are you up there?"

"I'm just up here writing about it. Figured it'd be good." I texted back.

Ping

"Wow ok. Journalists can still particupage [I think she meant 'participate']"

ping

"They can also be chewed out by other journalists when they get downstairs" She texted.

I ignored this. A fake journalist must always refine his fake craft. People have now coalesced at the FPH foyer and are chatting it up. The chanting has now become a steady hum of conversation and anticipation with the occasional sound of laughter. The grinch inside me couldn't help but wonder why they're happy.

"Will!" I looked up to see the human embodiment of a Basenji (dog breed. See Omen Volume 50 Issue 1 Page 4) coming straight towards me. Ida. Dang it. She followed me. "What are you doing?! Come with me, we've got to go downstairs!"

"What? I'm just doing my job as Omen staff!" I protested as she dragged me towards and then away from a wall of people. I couldn't help but see this as a small dog bossing a bigger one around. Or maybe a mother dragging her mature son. You're not my mom Ida! Geez!



Now, to back up. As much (I would hope all, but I can't say for certain) of the Hampshire community know, the school is probably merging with a partner. The student body seems to be in general agreement that the school should still accept an incoming class and also wishes to be more informed and be heard. Hence, why we all gathered together and stormed the castle walls of FPH Main Hall.

According to the FAKE NEWS New York Times, the college "with a \$42 million operating budget needs to set aside at least \$168 million, before it can enroll the next class. This isn't likely to happen." Apparently, any

college that isn't Harvard or Yale is concerned now. However, Mr. Rosenthal, the College's historian, points out that "Plenty of alumni have put Hampshire in their wills," which is great! However, "They haven't started dying yet. That's problematic in the short term, but not in the long term." Says Mr. Rosenthal.

As we took the Main Lecture Hall by storm, I laid eyes on the Board. The Board leader welcomed us and told us that there were many seats available and if we couldn't find one we could sit on the floor. As Ida and I sat down, a person who apparently works at the Admissions office asked "Is there anything that you could feasibly see happening that could actually make a tangible difference on this decision?" In response to this question Mim responded with a hopeful remark that "Alumni are more engaged than ever... and that's really great! [...] There are so many different things to weigh." Mim continued "Your question will be central about what else could we learn in the next two weeks."

As dialogue continued and I continued to take notes, people continued to take a stand in regard to Hampshire's future. Continued. I like that word. Continued. "For the first time, students are allowed to sit-in," a SAN member said to great applause. "There should be coordination for us to be in solidarity with one another, but the executive administration and the board of trustees has not followed up with us." An SAN Leader, stood up and said that "if you can physically look for a second, there is so many people in this room that are caring right now they're caring as quietly as they can. [applause] Every single student in this room wants the opportunity to be heard whether or not that's taken into account. [louder, more obnoxious, applause]"

People continued to take a stand, to state their comments and their frustration towards the board and the board continued to listen. "We should be able to accept the consequences of whatever decision is made... we should be able to make that decision and have the responsibility for it, we should be able to say this was something that we've been advocating for. If it was a mistake, it was our mistake but at least we got to make that choice."

"Do you remember what a risk [it was to come to Hampshire]? Do you remember that people thought

you were crazy for wanting to come here? That people thought it was ridiculous, that people thought that education here was a joke, all that. All the doubt, all the people outside telling you, that's not possible and then it was? We're in a situation where we see two roads neither of them are great... this is Hampshire. Let's build a new road!" Said an audience member to great applause.

As the meeting came to a close and the student body began to leave an SAN member told the group to "please exit peacefully... Y'all know where to be!" While the Hampshire Community walked out, I came down to the floor of the Main Hall where the board of trustees had been sitting. When asked for a comment, Luis Hernandez Hernandez (70F) said very sincerely, "I'm glad that they did this!... It hurts me that you [the student body] said that I don't care... I really do." Michael Plenty, a board member from the Class of 01F said "We're here listening. We love you guys!" As the student body left, for what would eventually be a week long stay at the president's office, I headed off to write this article as a fake journalist and wondered to myself if I should get a press hat with an index card attached labeled "Fake Journalist" or maybe "Just Journalism".

Bye for Now!
Just Journalisimng,
Will Newhall

NOTE: When I say "Fake Journalism" I mean that I am not, despite what others think, an actual journalist. I'm just another student like you.

Friday, February 1, 7:36 PM Hampshire Campus:

"Hey, Will!" Said a friend of mine running up to me.
"Yeah?"
"You're with the Omen right?"
"Yeah." I have a larger vocabulary than this, I swear.
"Well there's a protest going on at the RCC you better get your ass over there!"

Oh, Shit. I think to myself as I immediately start running towards the RCC. I hope I don't slip on the ice and die. When I get into the gym all I see at the doors is a wall of bodies blocking the entry way. I turn on my

recorder. Time to do some fake journalisming.

I walk into the gym to see a giant group of students chanting and marching around the gym: "Hampshire united! We'll never be divided! Hampshire united! We'll never be divided!" I begin to walk around and ask people what all is going on when the giant group begins to leave.

"Oh, what you're walking out now?" I ask to no one in particular.

"Yes, we're walking out! [...] Did you just get here?"

"Yes! Man, I'm a bad fake journalist! But why are we walking out?"

"I have no idea!" Said the fellow I was talking to. He seemed to be frothing with energy.

As I walked out the door I hear the sound of police sirens. Amherst police has arrived. I walk with the group back to Cole to see what all the news is about. As I walk in I see everyone in the first floor of Cole gathering together. The leadership then informs me that the police have come and that's why they dispersed.

After asking around I find out that the Board of Trustees has announced their decision. They are going to accept only early decision applicants and those who decided to take a gap year and they won't accept anyone else for F19 or S20. While this does minimize the chances of it, this doesn't necessarily mean that there won't be an F20 class. As I make my way out of Cole I see the students beginning to come together at the doors to help protect the Hampshire community from the police. I muscle my way through them and head over to the RCC to see what's going on over there.

As I walked into the RCC I saw staff and faculty present and still unsure as to their future at Hampshire. I saw both of my professors who were relevant to my concentration there and they weren't at all certain as to their future at the school.

After walking around a bit I finally find the head of the board of trustees, Gaye Hill, speaking to a bunch of other people recording. Man, my first time being in a media pit. As I moved around trying to find a good place to listen to what was going on Hill said that "If we don't make a certain amount of money, our bank

loans are recalled". She continues to explain that going into this partnership will help keep us afloat and ensure our financial security for the future. "If someone wanted to give us another 500 million [dollars] to add to that endowment, then we could start to talk about sustaining an independent Hampshire." In response to being asked about the inevitable firing of various faculty members she said that "We just don't know... it'll be up to the faculty, lead by Dean Rueschmann, to make those decisions... That's not a board responsibility." The faculty will poll the student body and determine what people are studying and making decisions accordingly. "We heard an impassioned argument from the faculty saying that no matter what they will make sure that every student will have a pathway to a Hampshire degree."

In response to being asked about whether the early decision students were given an option to opt out Hill stated: "Yes, they were already given an option to opt out two weeks ago and all their deposits have been returned... We haven't heard officially from anybody but we have heard anecdotally that at least one person is not coming, but we'll see." The future of the faculty will "be up to the faculty as a whole, it has nothing to do with the board at this point. It is up to the president, the dean of faculty, and the faculty as a whole."

Saturday, February 2, 9:30 AM Merrill Quad:

Next morning I came down to breakfast to find Willow, a new Omen Staff member, clearly sleep deprived from her night at Cole.

"What was it like, sleeping over there?" I ask.

"Well, it was the floor ... Our pillows were these giant folded [yoga mats] but I think I got some good sleep... It wasn't too noisy. It was bright, there were lights on, but I had a sexy cougar print [sleep mask] on." She's "not happy with the board's decision, I really wish they'd bring in a full class, I think the decision to only bring in 60 students was made out of fear and I think out of all the decisions they could have made it's the least sustainable one."

After finishing my breakfast and my interview with Willow, I went down to Cole and to the Dean's

Office to see how everyone was doing. I come into the dean's office to find a student literally sleeping on the staircase, in a relatively comfortable position given the situation.



As soon as I came up to the door to see a security guard sitting right there looking very tired. Poor guy. I think to myself. As I walk in I see the students gathered around trying to figure out there next step. Everyone seems alright given that some have been staying there for about two days now. After getting verbal confirmation from a bunch of people that they're fine, don't need any immediate attention, and are planning their next steps.

I head off to Cole to check on the second and larger group of students. This seems to be the general headquarters of the protest. Everyone is sleep deprived and exhausted. I can't believe Willow actually slept here. Then on further thought. I can't believe anyone slept here. Their resilience is admirable. After talking to the leadership some more, it seems that they feel the event wasn't great but it's better than nothing. According to a student who slept there, they're planning on "Standing with the faculty and staff."

An alum who decided to visit was willing to comment and talk about their involvement in the protest. "I asked if some of [the alumni] wanted to meet in person and that kind of turned into this little local alumni group that didn't exist until two weeks ago. We've been sending you guys some food and keeping in touch.

We've been keeping in touch with some of the students here... we have a meeting coming up on Sunday and I just want to make sure that our efforts from here are coordinated with you guys. We're doing what you guys need us to be doing. And we're leveraging what ever we are able to." They continued saying: "I've been on a school board before, I know what's it's like to have to make...good decisions and have people be angry with you, but I don't feel like that is what's happening here. I feel like there's been a lot of opportunities where more people could have been a part of the process and that hasn't happened."

Sunday, February 3, 2019, Sometime in the afternoon:

There was a meeting today in FPH Main Hall for the protesters to get their demands in order. According to the people at the meeting and the faculty member who was there. the faculty don't know the names of the students and would like to. It turns out that while Early Decision students (ED students) and students who chose to take a gap year were accepted into Hampshire, Early Action students were not. The students will attempt to find the names of the F19 class and will reach out to the incoming class to alert them to the current situation. They stated that they would like to have more representation of the student body involved in the board. This is to allow students to vote on important decisions like the one that was held to determine the incoming class. This they have termed "Shared Governance". This may drastically change the way the school is run. They plan to write constitutional amendments, in their words, "like a manifesto". The way they want to make this shared governance possible is by adding votes to the board from major stakeholders like students, faculty, and staff. The protestors want the school to adhere to the amendments that were made. Part of this includes Unionization of faculty, staff, and the student body and No NDAs. After the board's decision, the protesters seem split as to their reaction over it. However, as a group the student protesters believe that the board has interests against them. They then took a vote on the their demands:

- Good Severance packages for faculty and staff (Majority Approval)
- Staff related to accessibility stay (Majority Approval)
- COSA is setting up a meeting with the staff to get

data on students with accommodations. One member commented "Hampshire should be on the cutting edge [of disability advocacy] We have the chance to be a haven for [students with disability]"

-People laid off should get the chance to be rehired when hampshire is no longer in need (Majority Approval)

Faculty and staff should stay through the semester (Vote: In Favor)

-Getting people into board meetings and getting power (Crisis Committee) (Vote: In Favor)

-Reconfiguration of the Administration, Shared governance (Vote: In Favor)

-Requesting that the administration tell us what they mean by "Transparency" and involve students in reconfiguration (vote: In Favor)

-Getting rid of NDA's (Vote: In Favor). According to the Staff member who was present the AAUP is against NDA's for higher education institutions so this makes Mim's NDA about the merger, a potential press problem

-Getting people into board meetings and getting power (Crisis Committee) (Vote: In Favor)

As the protest has gone on work assignments have been doled out to members of the protest to help accomplish the group's goals. Various assignments have been split up among committees and the committees have chosen leaders called "Point people". The leaders of the whole group have decided to call themselves Central Organizers.

February 4, 2019 11:50 PM EST Hampshire College Campus, Amherst, MA

[Trigger Warning: Physical and Emotional Abuse]

This is fucking stupid. I wanted to write this at the end of the protest because I felt that this would be useful to me and to others. Now I have to write this because, you, the community has to look in the mirror and see what you've become. They've become their own worst enemy. I understand your anger. I understand your wishes. But it shouldn't be taken out on us.

I know you've been treated poorly by the press in the past, but I am not the press. I am Omen Staff. I am a student. I am your peer. I am white. I am cisgendered. I am male. I am straight. Most importantly, I am

human. I want to tell you about myself so that you, the Hampshire College Community, learn my story, learn about me, and maybe, just maybe, look back on yourselves and reflect on your treatment of everyone. Not just those that agree with you. Not just your friends. But your enemies too. I mean Republicans, I mean Trump, I mean homophobes, and all xenophobes for that matter. Do not judge lest ye be judged. Take a moment to breathe, meditate and reflect. Now listen.

I was abused. I was abused by my father, by my girlfriend, and by a teacher. The worst part of it was that I didn't even notice. I thought this was normal. I was being treated like shit and I didn't even notice because I didn't have anything to compare it to. I thought friends were people who would make fun of you and then get mad when you responded in kind. I just didn't know better.

My ex-girlfriend/fiancé (I'll explain later) would tell me to call her because "how do I know you're not cheating on me?" she'd say. She even texted my mother during brain surgery while I was knocked out, because "I want to talk to him!" As if her wishes were more valuable than my survival. When I'm finally willing to call her and talk to her she starts talking about marriage, living together, and having kids. I jokingly ask her to marry me. She screams "YES!!!" and starts talking about what the wedding is gonna look like. This freaked me out so I sent her a classic "it's not you, it's me" break up text. She flipped out and threatened to kill me. I blocked her. This is how I realized that sometimes it's better to be alone than to be in toxic company.

I was abused by a teacher. I trusted him. Until, that is, he took me into a room, locked the door and screamed at me for 2 hours straight. He tried to hit me. Thankfully his right hook connected with my arm instead of my head. When I finally got out of there I stayed completely calm until I got into the car with my parents and just broke down. This is how I came to realize that everyone is not who they appear to be.

My father once screamed at me about how I was a horrible son because I refused to jump on a trampoline. I was a "lazy, good for nothing, son of a bitch". I'd had brain surgery 6 months ago so of course I didn't want to jump on a trampoline and risk a brain injury. So I

left the house. I didn't know where I was going. I didn't care. This is how I learned that even those who are supposed to love you don't always.

They tried to destroy me but instead I persevered. As time has gone on, I've stopped hating them and started pitying them. These people need to bully and hurt others in order to feel good about themselves. How sad is that? When you think about it, it's really, truly, tragic. Now, all I hope for is that these people one day become good people. I think deep down they're hurting and really all they need is to learn to love themselves. Maybe then will they become the people I know they can be.

I want to say, I forgive you. I forgive you Dad for not being there when I needed you. I forgive you for the countless birthdays and Christmases without you. I forgive you for abusing me. I forgive you for that day. I forgive you. I forgive you, Dutson, for trapping me. I forgive you for hitting me. I forgive you for blackmailing me and ruining my relationships with my closest friends. I forgive you. I forgive you, Amanda, for manipulating me. I forgive you for the abuse I received from you. I forgive you. I forgive these people for what they've done to me. I hope one day they can forgive themselves.

Treat others like you wish to be treated. If you want to be treated with kindness, then treat others with kindness. If you want to be respected, then respect others. Give, but do not expect to receive. Don't just be kind to those who agree with you. Be kind to those who disagree with you. It's not easy. I'm not expecting you to do this with ease. Hell, I'm not even expecting anyone to do this at all. I'm hoping you will. I'm hoping one day you will turn the other cheek. I'm hoping one day when someone gets mad at you, that you will look at them and say "I'm sorry you feel that way" and move on. You are not a perfect person. I am not a perfect person. No one is a perfect person. But we can be good people. We can be kind to others. Even those who aren't kind to us. Do me a favor. When you next see an angry person who spouts hate at you look them in the eyes and say "I forgive you." Treat others as you wish to be treated.

February 7, 6:08 PM - Hampshire Campus

I'm sitting here in my room reflecting on what all has been going on for the past week. I'm about to head off to work on Omen Layout and I've decided that I should write about my experience. I've included a piece (a bit of a rant) of what my life has been like and how people's assumptions have affected me on campus. In that I rant I made a request. I asked that the next time a member of the Hampshire community sees someone spout hate to just look at them and say "I forgive you". I want to reflect on how I came to write this rant by writing about my experience covering the beginning of this protest.

January 31st, 2019

I was walking back to my dorm when I saw it. I saw a sign on the wall telling me that there was going to be a protest at FPH Main Hall at 2:30. I hadn't gotten to go to any meeting at all about the future of Hampshire and I figured I might as well go and see what's up. I get there a little early so no one was there. When everyone got here I started taking notes on this because it seemed like something important. I took notes on the entire thing. Afterwards I still felt a buzz and really enjoyed this. It was so much fun! Getting to experience the protest from an outsider perspective and seeing it through the lens of journalism. It was amazing. I wanted to do this again.

February 1st, 2019

I woke up totally ready for the day. When I went down to breakfast I found out that a lot of the people who were at the meeting yesterday had slept at the President's Office in Cole and the Dean of Student's Office (DoS). I gathered some of my Omen friends and we walked around and talked to people about it. That night I find out that there is a protest in relation to the Board's announcement about the future of Hampshire. I ran down to the RCC to see what's going on. As I came in to the rally I got the same buzz that I'd gotten before. I even ended up in a sort of media pit with other people holding their phones out to get comments from Gale Hill. This felt amazing!

February 2nd, 2019

The morning arrived (not quickly enough in my opinion and I hopped out of bed to get ready for the

day. I couldn't wait! When I got down to SAGA I saw fellow Omen Staff member Willow. She told me that she'd slept the night in Cole and was now part of the protest. This kind of unsettled me though at the time I didn't know why. In retrospect this unsettled me because of how quickly it had happened. The day before she hadn't really expressed an opinion but now she was part of the protest. Whatever, that's her choice. Later, I came to the DoS to see what all was going on when I ran into a fellow Omen Staff member, Simon. I told him about what I was doing and he was impressed. Yay! I've impressed Simon. He introduced me to this friend (who's name I've forgotten) and he kept saying "The Omen is a real newspaper now!". My excitement kept going. I went upstairs to see what all was going on. When I started talking to people they seemed perfectly friendly, but after I mentioned that I'm omen staff they started getting horribly wary. I didn't understand why because I'm one of you. I am a student. Yet they still treated me like an outsider.

February 3rd, 2019

I woke up this morning but all I wanted was to go to bed. I hadn't been sleeping well because I was so involved in the protest. I got up and got ready for the day but this day felt different. I felt like I couldn't trust anyone. I felt like I was being watched. I got my food but I checked it for poison like I'd been taught. No one would poison my food, right? The Hampshire Community wasn't that aggressive, right? I went to church that day and asked the priest to pray for the protesters. After I got back I went to check on everyone at Cole. While I was there some people were perfectly amiable but I couldn't help but see that some were glaring at me. I felt that they wished me ill or dead. I shook this off. It's ridiculous, I thought to myself. They wouldn't wish ill on one of their own would they? As the day went on people started putting more restrictions on me. They'd already done some like no recording or taking pictures of people without permission. That one made sense but then they started putting more and more restrictions on me and getting more and more hostile towards me. This got especially bad when I went to DoS and saw they were definitely greeting me with glares and fake smiles.

February 4th 2019

I didn't want to get up. I have to I thought to myself I need to go to class. Reluctantly I got up. I looked in the mirror and I saw the usual. I saw myself but with one small difference. I looked gaunt. I'm a normally scrawny person but I'm not that scrawny. Whatever. I shake it off and head down to breakfast and I look very intensely at my food. I examine it to find poison of course. You can't trust others after all. One day they're your friend the next they're looking at you like you're the enemy. Can't trust them. Can't trust anyone these days. I head off to class soon after because I have class soon after when I finally get out of class at about 2 or so. I walk down to the DoS to see what's up and when I walk in someone walks up to me and asks me to walk out with them. That's a perfectly reasonable request so sure! Of course I will. When we get about halfway down the stairs they flip a shit and tell me that I can't write anything about them or take pictures at all. What the hell? Are they asking me to write an Op-Ed in which I roast them mercilessly? Because that seems to be what they're asking for. I leave and they tell me to come back when I'm ready to have a civil discussion. They say it in the exact same condescending tone that I heard from my abusive father, teacher, and girlfriend. As if I was the crazy one. Sure, maybe I am but this has me so riled up and I'm so worried that they're going to come in the middle of the night to kill me that I decide to go to health services, then security, to get some help with the situation because I feel unsafe. I take a breather and don't do any reporting for a few hours and then head off to the meeting that they were having that night. I take notes and stay quiet the whole time until I hear the person who had flipped a shit at me before say that they should restrict all media including the Omen. I finally break down. "NO! We are your friends we're one of you!" I say and then I just break down into the fourth full blown panic attack that day. Why are they doing this to us? What did we do to deserve this?

After getting help (and some ice cream) from a friend, I go to my room and write the rant about Hampshire's backwards views because I've had enough of it. Hate only begets hate, after all and we, the Hampshire community can be better than that.

REFLECTIONS ON CRISIS AND CHANGE

BY GEORGE FENN

On Hampshire College's fiscal crisis, in recent weeks, amid all the protest, demand, and invective, a voice has been demanded. Does it have anything to say?

When we look around us, we think that we see reality. Instead, we should see what we call reality as our own limitations in seeing reality. Perhaps then, we would not overestimate our abilities as human beings. The act of revolt is an important aspect of change. But there is one issue in this word revolt. It generally involves the process of destruction. Once you cease to cooperate within the sphere of the authority, you become the active enemy of that authority.

What is frequently missed, is the comparative difficulty to create.

Historically, the revolutionaries are revolutionaries until they gain power; at which point they cease to be effectual, they fall apart. Because the only thing that held them together was a common enemy. A force built to criticize rarely makes the leap to create. There are two approaches to change. One is facilitated by the same antagonistic behavior which facilitates change through an attack upon the dominant idea, or persons. The other approach, is that you can trump anyone as long as your idea, your approach, is superior to theirs. One is a destructive force of change, the other is a constructive force of change - both in retrospect involve destruction, but in varying degrees. Constructive destruction is exceedingly rare.

Because truthfully, it is easier to destroy than to create. Perhaps we are creatures of entropy.

At this point, it would be well to raise a differentiation between realistic and unrealistic constructive change. If we are to adopt true solutions, constructive solutions, as undergoing a spontaneous domination simply due to superiority, the evidence of whether an idea is good, or bad, should be realized through the implementation process. If it does not occur, if things are becoming worse, it would be well to rethink the approach. There are certain realities which are extremely difficult to overcome. These realities are the restrictions that we see around us. Some are more fundamental, such as gravity, others socially fundamental, relying upon cooperation, such as money.

Humans are comparatively social animals, social to the extent that we are constantly reacting to our surroundings, and changing from them. Certain actions by one individual naturally influence another set of individuals. And in the process, this influence undermines the mentality of the formerly unaffected individuals. This process can have the inflating effect of appearing successful, but increasing support does not change the reality of the thing supported. If enough people agree that gravity does not exist, does that change the reality of gravity? Is your own bubble-reality the real reality? Is there any such thing as real? The other possibility, is that it will result in the sort of aerostatic flutter that destroyed the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

Small Conversations and Big Questions

by Chloe Omelchuck

As I sat down to create my contribution to this issue I thought about a lot of things. I am not someone who has actively (or even passively) participated in student action throughout this crisis. This may be partly due to the fact that, as a Div III the outcome of this battle doesn't affect me nearly as much as everyone else. And to everyone whose future will be impacted by this crisis, you have my deepest condolences (no, that was not condescension, I'm just a fancy writer). However, I think the biggest reason that I haven't participated in the meetings and the protests and the public discussions is that it's not the way that I choose to engage with troubling issues.

What I have learned through observation both of past events at Hampshire and of larger events in this nation is that large speeches and debates filled with lots of people rarely serve to do anything to change people's minds. At best, they give information to people, at worst, they can leave participants with a sense that they haven't been heard which lingers in the form of frustration and anger. Vitriol and blame are frightening to me, because I can see how they replicate themselves and make a bad situation worse. I choose to approach important issues by engaging in conversations with small groups of people, to understand their views and to explain my own. It is through this method that I have observed and been impacted by the recent events on campus. I would now like to share with you my experience.

Why are there so many emails in my inbox?
Huh.

On my way into the library I am waylaid by a student with a petition for a vote of no confidence in the board and to admit a 2019F class. I explain that I don't support either of those ideas. I ask why they believe in their position. We chat briefly about our different opinions before I carry on my way. I do not sign the petition.

Friday, Feb 1, 10:21 AM [Text Message]

Ida: Are you at the sit in right now? I haven't seen you at all.

Me: No, I'm not.

Ida: Ok. Do you have any idea of standard journalistic practices. I wrote down notes but they don't want me to use it because they want to appear unified...

Me: Is this someone you interviewed, or just someone you were talking with?

Ida: I was in the room while discussions about releasing a statement were happening

Me: Okay, well, was it a public forum? Like, could anyone be in the room?

Ida: They learned that I was taking notes and they as I not write about it, because even though The Omen is a campus publication, bigger outlets will use what we've written to report on events. No, it was really just for Hampshire students. Any Hampshire student technically.

Me: So they don't want dissenting opinions amongst the students to be expressed because they're afraid that larger news outlets will get ahold of a paper copy of the Omen and use the dissenting opinion to give an impression of... dissent? I think it's important that student opinion be expressed. There's a lot of people with different opinions and everyone should know that there are other students who have the same ideas about certain issues. The only person whose name has to be on the article is yours, so individuals don't need to be called out for their opinions.

Ida: Unm. Hold on, let me orocess [process] all this.

Me: Sorry. Actually, are you available during lunch? We can just meet up and discuss this.

Ida: I'm not sure if I will be doing an op-ed or an attempt at unbaised reporting. I want to do the latter bc if you look at old Omen copies the Omen has reported on student protests of this nature. And I want to do the same bc of my weird obsession with legacies. I want to leave a good record of this event behind in the Omen... This is a really important time

The Omen • Volume 50, Issue 2

in Hamp history and I want to be a part of this.
Me: Yeah. It hasn't come up that much since I've been editrix, but The Omen is kind of one of Hampshire's only forms of institutional memory. Like, if we don't record it in some way, in 20 years there won't be any memory of what really happened.
Ida: That's why I care. No one else will be reporting as a firsthand witness. I totally agree with you, basically.

While I'm waiting for Ida at the Bridge another student approaches me with a petition.

"Have you signed this?"

"No."

"Okay, well, it's for a vote of no confidence in the board and a demand for the admittance of a 2019F class," he replies, holding it out to me. I don't take it.

"Well, I don't agree with those things."

"Oh," he says. And there's an awkward silence. Before I can ask him anymore questions he turns around and leaves. I'm a little annoyed by his apparent assumption that I would just sign his petition as a matter of course.

Ida joins me for lunch and we discuss the matter she brought up earlier in more in depth. Conclusion: Ida will continue to attempt to record everything she can. We can sit down later and decide what sort of 'danger' the campus may be in due to leaks to outside media from the Omen.

Friday, February 1, 1:06 PM [Text Message]

Ida: Do you think they mean us?

[screenshot of statement: "Below is the official statement that we and a number of people coordinating with SAN have released. We encourage you to direct ALL PRESS PEOPLE TO SARAH, their phone number is (xxx)-xxx-xxxx."]

Ida: Like, we aren't NY fucking T

Me: No, I don't think they mean us

Ida: People don't want to talk to me. It's so fucking annoying.

Friday, February 1, 4:44 PM [Text Message]

Me: It's making me a little angry now, actually. Who gave this small group of students the right to control all the information that any student on campus wishes to share with the press? Like, I get that sending out a disorganized message can be detrimental, but they also don't have the rights to be the voice of every student. They're being just as bad as the administration when it comes to transparency.
Ida: Yeah it's disgusting. Did you see the "anyone who wants to speak with a student must be with a press liaison?" It was a sign at Cole.

Me: Yeah, I was walking back to my mod when I saw it and it really pissed me off.

Actually, that sign was the reason that I had texted her in the first place. That first text was me expressing my anger in the form of a small rant. Will later told me that he had attempted to take a picture of the sign, but was dissuaded from doing so by some other students.

Me: Like, did these people just decide that they were press liaisons? I can't really say that there shouldn't be someone in charge of drafting messages for the wider community, but they also shouldn't be telling people that theirs is the only student voice. Like, if a student wants to speak to the press that's their business...

I hear a lot from Will and Ida over the weekend. There's more emails in my inbox. The distrust of the administration doesn't seem to be going down. On Tuesday, February 5, I decide the existing Omen staff need to have a little meeting about how to go about "reporting" on this issue. I make a list.

Issues for the meeting tonight:

What is the line between the Omen's journalistic responsibility to investigate and report on what is happening and our responsibility as a publication of Hampshire to this institution and our responsibility as students at Hampshire?

At what point is the Omen a publication just for the community vs. a publication that can be viewed by a

wider press and public?

How can we report on what is happening in a way that is not only unbiased, but also does not hinder the negotiation process?

What steps can we take to ensure that the Omen only reaches students at Hampshire, and not the wider media?

Because the Omen is an open-submission publication how much of a responsibility to we have to behave as an 'actual' publication?

Publication of news is both a responsibility to people who need to be informed of current events, but we must also balance that with consideration that our publication can also influence how events play out.

At what point does airing divisive opinions cause more divisiveness and at what point does sharing information lead to a greater understanding and agreement from all parties?

What constitutes a divisive opinion?

As we discuss we come to the stance that I expressed in the Editorial. The Omen staff have no responsibility other than to continue to enable the publication of the Hampshire student body's submissions to the Omen. What the Omen staff happen to submit to the Omen has no more weight of authority than any other student. And if the Omen staff happen to have a greater dedication to reporting than most students then... more power to them!

I do feel guilty about not having had this meeting sooner. I feel as though I've made things harder for Ida and Will by not sitting down to discuss with them what their role could be in this. I can't help but feel that the people who were refusing to talk to them and pushing them away might have been a little less harsh if I had taken more of a leadership role from the beginning and given them the language to explain what they were really hoping for in becoming, in Will's words, "fake journalists."

This crisis has caused me to deeply consider the roles that freedom of speech and of the press have to play in protest. It

brought up questions for me about who has the right to speak and an individual's responsibility and accountability to their community. It made me think about my role in the Hampshire community. I have been on The Omen staff since my first year. I have been Editrix since my second semester. My goal has always been to provide a platform to the Hampshire community to air their concerns, bring up their problems, and to build bridges between interests and groups within the community. Most of all, I want the Omen to be a place where Hampshire students can be a community.

So many people on this campus care so deeply about so many different things. All of these facets are equally important to creating the vision of Hampshire that we want to see become a reality. And despite all of these people working towards these amazing goals, our campus is often deeply divided. Hampshire students sometimes focus so much that we can lose sight of things that fall outside of "our" passions, and that is what causes disagreement. My hope for The Omen and for this community is that we can listen to our fellows and, no matter how we may agree or disagree, continue to engage in discussions of what Hampshire should be.

SECTION LIES

The Cat Hypothesis

By Chloe Omelchuck

“No, the problem with Hampshire students is that they’re like cats.”

[????]

“Well, it’s fun to be a snarky bastard, but if you have a whole group of snarky bastards who want to do nothing more than sit back and shoot down each other’s ideas you’re not going to get anywhere.”

-A conversation between Omen Staff

I have often likened Hampshire students to cats. It’s an age-old idiom that any impossible task can be equated to attempting to herd said creature, and much the same can be said of attempting to organize Hampshire students. This is not to say anything disparaging about cats or Hampshire students, in fact I love cats (unfortunately most Hampshire students won’t purr and cuddle or else I would love them as much as I do cats). It’s just an important thing to recognize when trying to understand our lack of success in forming any sort of elected student ruling body.

First, Hampshire students don’t want to have a student government. They don’t like being told what to do and scoff at anyone who claims to have the authority to do so.

Second, Hampshire students know what they want and don’t care about much else. Which is to say that they don’t care what others are doing until it negatively impacts them and then they’ll fight tooth and claw to get things how they want them.

Third, it’s nearly impossible for the sheepdogs of the Omen to corral Hampshire students into submitting. [I’m trying to herd them, but they just keep staring at me with an unimpressed look on their face.]

Fourth, some Hampshire students get along fine and some Hampshire students can’t be in the same room for five minutes without getting into a spat. There is very little rhyme or reason to this.

Fifth, Hampshire students will catch an injustice and torment it until its good and dead (or chase it all over campus, knocking over furniture and generally being a nuisance).

As you can see, these are some of Hampshire students’ most catlike traits. Please be mindful of your cattiness.

SECTION HATE

HUMOROUS HAMPSHIRE HOROSCOPE: PROTEST EDITION

BY WILL NEWHALL

ARIES

You will start a protest. Why is irrelevant.

TAURUS

You will join the Sit-in and then leave three days later because you actually have a life.

GEMINI

You found out what Gem and I will do. If you get it submit to the Omen.

CANCER

You will join the protest against your will because you were dragged into this by your one true love, Shia LaBouef.

LEO

You will avoid all protests because you avoid all people

VIRGO

You will become one of the Press Liasons. You will love the Omen because we love you.

LIBRA

You will join the protest and then miss your dog. And then quit.

SCORPIO

You will become one of the Police Liasons and when someone is roasted you will draw a chalk outline of their body to show how they've been MURDERED by words.

SAGITTARIUS

You will join the protest. Not because you agree but you've always wanted to lie outside like an actual hippy on Haight Street. Little did you know, there would be no outside time.

CAPRICORN

You know what's going on. You are definitely not confused at all. You DID notice something strange though. For some reason it reminds you of Animal Farm.

AQUARIUS

You love fighting for causes. You don't really know why your fighting but that doesn't matter so long as you're fighting.

PISCES

You will watch the protest from a distance. Something FISH-y is going on. If you get it submit to the Omen.



Wait! I just
wanna talk!